

Hon Steven Marshall MP
Premier

Hon Stephen Wade MLC
Minister for Health and Wellbeing

Sunday 22 March 2020

South Australia's borders to close

The State Government has taken unprecedented action in response to the coronavirus pandemic requiring all people entering South Australia to isolate for 14-days from their arrival.

This will apply immediately to South Australians, other Australians and other travellers, and will be supported by border control from Tuesday 24 March at 4pm.

The measure, which was recommended by Chief Public Health Officer Nicola Spurrier, will include exemptions for essential travel to maintain health, the food supply chain, and the State's economic needs.

The move will help delay community transmission of the disease which is happening in other parts of Australia, in particular the eastern states.

"I'm ordering the effective closure of our borders to protect the health of South Australians by slowing the spread of the virus," Premier Marshall said.

"The health of South Australians is unquestionably our number one priority and that is why we are acting swiftly and decisively to protect them from the impact of the disease.

"There will be a 14-day isolation requirement for non-essential travellers but food and medical distribution channels along with key employment sectors will have exemptions where appropriate.

"The State Government will continue to follow the advice of the State's leading medical experts to roll out a strong plan to mitigate the economic and health threats posed by coronavirus."

Minister for Health and Wellbeing Stephen Wade said data from independent think tank Grattan Institute shows that South Australia is ahead of the curve in regard to coronavirus.

"As we enter the next phase of the epidemic in Australia we are taking broad ranging action to stay ahead of the curve," Minister Wade said.

"The data shows that by acting swiftly and decisively to alert South Australians of the threat and by communicating clearly about what are the steps that need to be taken to slow or delay the spread we are in a better position than the eastern states.

"Now is the time for a concerted, community-wide effort as we know the virus is coming and the peak is only weeks or months away."

"I urge everyone to continue to follow the advice of the experts at SA Health and the Communicable Disease Control Branch during these challenging times."

Associate Professor Nicola Spurrier said that with increasing community transmission occurring interstate, South Australia needs to act now to slow the onset of local transmission.

"These border controls will give us more time to prepare for the virus in South Australia," Assoc Prof Spurrier said.

"We are determined to take every required step to help protect South Australians from the continued advance of coronavirus."

"We also need the community to work together, and everyone to do the right thing in terms of practicing appropriate hand hygiene and social distancing measures."

The criteria for testing at the dedicated COVID-19 clinics will be expanded to recognise the risk from interstate travel.

This includes expanding testing to anyone who has travelled from interstate in the past seven days and has new respiratory symptoms.

Exemptions will apply for essential transport including health and medical supplies, and health personnel and patients, food and commercial supply chains (i.e. the carrying of goods), health workers, near border interactions, travel of a relative/carer of a dependant individual, and for emergency services.

Other travellers (for example fly-in-fly-out workers in the mining industry or national level sporting teams) could be exempt from this provision provided they had approved disease control mechanisms in place.

The isolation requirements will include South Australians who return from interstate and will be in force from 4pm on Tuesday 24 March.

SAPOL will continue to conduct random checks to ensure those required to self-isolate are doing so.